



National Transportation Safety Board

The Chairman's Corner

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Friday, August 8, 2008

Office of Aviation Safety Launches to Recent Accidents

The Office of Aviation Safety has launched on several recent high-profile accidents and incidents both in the U.S. and abroad.

Redding, California - On August 6, a Go Team was dispatched to investigate a helicopter crash in a remote wooded area about 35 miles northwest of Redding, California. The Sikorsky S-61N (N612AZ) operated by the U.S. Department of Forestry, crashed at about 7:30 p.m. PDT on August 5 during takeoff. A post-crash fire ensued. Of the 13 people reported to be on-board, four suffered serious injuries; nine are presumed to be fatally injured. NTSB Senior Air Safety Investigator Jim Struhsaker (WPR) was designated as investigator-in-charge and Member Kitty Higgins served as the spokesperson for the investigation. They were assisted on-scene by Zoe Keliher (WPR), Mike Hauf (AS-40), Elias Kontanis (TDA), Max Green (TDA), and Bridget Serchak and Ted Lopatkiewicz (PA).



Van McKenny (WPR) briefs the press on-scene in Oregon

Gearhart, Oregon - On August 4, at about 7:00a.m. PDT, a Cessna 172 crashed into a home in Gearhart, Oregon shortly after takeoff from Seaside Municipal Airport. Three children on the ground were among the five people fatally injured. Van McKenny (WPR) is serving as investigator-in-charge, and was accompanied on-scene by Debbie Hall and Paul Sledzik (TDA).

Owatonna, Minnesota - At approximately 9:40 a.m. CDT on July 31, a BAE 125-800A, operated by East Coast Jets, crashed on approach to Owatonna Degner Regional Airport in Owatonna, Minnesota. Witnesses indicated that the aircraft was attempting a go-around on runway 30 when it appeared that the aircraft rolled causing a wing to contact the ground and the aircraft lost control and crashed. The aircraft wreckage was spread from the runway, across a road, and into a corn field adjacent to the airport. There were 8 confirmed fatalities in the accident. The flight originated in Atlantic City, NJ and Owatonna was the planned destination.



Member Steve Chealander and John Lovell (AS-10) answer questions at a press conference in Owatonna, Minnesota

The Safety Board launched a team to investigate the accident with Member Steven Chealander as the member on-scene serving as the principle spokesperson. John Lovell was the investigator-in-charge. They were assisted by Terry Williams (PA), Frank Hildrup (AS-21) as additional IIC support; Clint Crookshanks (AS-40); Carol Horgan (AS-40); Roger Cox (AS-30); Don Eick (AS-30); Malcolm Brenner (AS-50); Cindy Keegan (AS-60); Erik Grosf and Elias Kontanis (TDA); Ed Malinowski (CEN); Bruce Coury and Aaron Dietz (RE-10); and Eunice Bellinger (AS-20). Additional headquarters support for the investigation included: Scott Dunham (AS-30); Jim Cash (RE-40); Joe Gregor (RE-40); and John O'Callahan (RE-60).



Chairman Rosenker examines the wreckage of a Lancair Legacy

Oshkosh, Wisconsin - On July 31, a homebuilt Lancair Legacy crashed during approach to runway 27 at the airport in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The pilot and passenger were killed. The personal flight left from Pennsylvania in order to attend the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Airventure 2008 event at Oshkosh. Carl Dinwiddie (CEN) responded to the accident site. Chairman Rosenker was also attending Airventure and participated in the on-scene investigation

Highlands, North Carolina - On July 29, at about 3:00 p.m. EDT, a Piper PA-23 crashed into a heavily-wooded area in Highlands, North Carolina while on an IFR flight plan from Louisville, Kentucky to Hazlehurst, Georgia. The two pilots on the plane were both fatally injured, and there were no reports of injuries on the ground. Jill Demko (ERA) served as the investigator-in-charge.



Jill Demko (ERA) photographs wreckage of a PA-23 in North Carolina

Manila, Phillipines - On July 25, Chairman Rosenker designated Joe Sedor (AS-10) as the U.S. Accredited Representative to assist the Australian Safety Board in the investigation of a Qantas Airlines B747. Mr. Sedor was accompanied by Steve Magladry (AS-40) to investigate a Qantas Flight that made an emergency landing after the flight crew reportedly heard a loud bang and the airplane experienced depressurization while in flight. The airplane was en route to Melbourne, Australia from Hong Kong, and landed safely in Manila at 11:15 am local time. There were no reported injuries among the 346 passengers and 19 crewmembers. The aircraft has a 5 foot hole in the cargo area forward of the right wing leading edge and there was also some wing damage, believed to be from an exploding oxygen tank.

NTSB Presence Noted at Oshkosh Air Show



Chairman Rosenker presenting Deputy Sheriff Darren Putzer with a certificate of recognition

The NTSB was well represented at the 2008 EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) AirVenture air show in Oshkosh, Wisconsin from July 28 – August 3. During the week, NTSB staff members gave daily presentations to the public on various aviation safety issues, along with an overview of past accidents. Attendance at the NTSB presentations was high, and it counted for an educational credit in the FAA WINGS pilot proficiency program. On Thursday, July 31, Chairman Mark Rosenker presented a certificate of recognition to Winnebago County Deputy Sheriff Darren Putzer for his contribution to two different aviation accident investigations at the air show over the past two years. Chairman Rosenker and Jeff Guzzetti (AS-2R) also had a working lunch with the executive members of the ASTM International Committee for Special Light Sport Aircraft (S-LSA) to discuss safety issues related to the relatively new category of S-LSA airplanes. In addition to delivering presentations and attending meetings, NTSB staff and investigators gave 15 minute radio interviews on EAA Radio, providing AirVenture attendees a glimpse into the work of the Board. Throughout the week-long air show, which consisted of an estimated 10,000 airplanes, 2,516 show planes, 797 exhibitors, and 540,000 attendees, including visitors from 71 nations, the NTSB booth was consistently packed and received great reviews from the public.

Representing the NTSB at this year's AirVenture were:

Chairman Mark Rosenker, Tom Doyle (Office of the Chairman), Gina Kocher, (Office of the Chairman), Jeff Guzzetti (AS-2R), Lorenda Ward (AS-10), Carl Dinwiddie (AS-CEN), Girard Steichen (AS-CEN), Jim Silliman (AS-CEN), Aaron Sauer (AS-CEN), John Brannen (AS-CEN), Beverley Drake (AS-20), Dan Bartlett (AS-30), Scott Dunham (AS-30), and Chris Babcock (RE-40). Bob Swaim designed and constructed the booth exhibit.



At the NTSB Booth from left to right: Gina Kocher, Chairman Rosenker, Aaron Sauer, Beverley Drake, and Jeff Guzzetti

FBI Dive Team Assists with NTSB Investigation



NTSB Investigator Shawn Etcher (Far Right) works with the FBI Dive Team and the Maine State Police to recover wreckage from an aircraft accident

After a Marchetti SF-260 training aircraft crashed into Maine's Penobscot Bay on April 6, 2008, ASI Shawn Etcher of the Eastern Regional Office responded to initiate the investigation. Due to the many challenges caused by the aircraft crashing into the water, Shawn requested assistance from the FBI Dive Team through the NTSB's FBI ERT liaison, Erik Grosf.

It was decided that the FBI Dive team in cooperation with the Maine State Police dive team would travel to the site to assist ASI Etcher with underwater documentation of the wreckage and retrieval of any necessary aircraft components. On July 21, Erik Grosf traveled to the site to provide coordination between ASI Etcher and the dive teams. In addition, he provided regular updates on the progress of the investigation to the family. The family was very appreciative of the professional, multi-agency effort to assist in determining the cause of the accident that claimed the life of their loved one.

NTSB Addresses PHMSA Hazmat Group

Vice Chairman Robert Sumwalt and Director of the Office of Railroad, Pipeline, and Hazardous Materials Investigations Bob Chipkevich spoke at a PHMSA (Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration) workshop on Thursday, July 31. The PHMSA workshop was titled, "Transporting Hazardous Materials Safely--the Next 100 Years" in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the hazardous materials transportation safety program.

The Vice Chairman spoke of the need for safety culture and ways for an organization to continuously attempt to achieve it. He described the results of two accident investigations to illustrate the necessity of safety culture. He discussed the rupture of a railroad tank car containing hazardous waste that occurred in Clymers, Indiana, in 1999 in which the NTSB found a "failure of...management to develop and implement safe procedures for offloading [hazardous] wastes..." He also cited an NTSB report on the overflow of gasoline and fire at a service station-convenience store in Biloxi, MS, in 1998. The probable cause listed the failure of company officials to follow established company procedures and a lack of adequate procedures for several operations.

Vice Chairman Sumwalt noted that data must be gathered in order gain knowledge and assess risk to avoid such catastrophes and spoke of the ways that an organization that strives to have a safety culture might obtain that data.

Bob Chipkevich also addressed the group and provided a historical perspective of hazardous materials accidents investigated by the Safety Board, and recommendations that stemmed from these accidents.



Vice Chairman Sumwalt with PHMSA Deputy Administrator Krista Edwards and PHMSA Administrator Carl Johnson

Member Higgins Addresses American Association of Airport Executives

Member Kitty Higgins spoke as part of the keynote panel of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) NextGen Solutions for Airports – ADS-B and Beyond, on August 5, 2008, in Louisville, Kentucky. The Conference and Expo brought together prominent airport executives, government executives, and industry leaders to explore and demonstrate ADS-B and other unique airport-centric technologies.

Member Higgins' remarks emphasized NTSB's runway incursion prevention recommendations, specifically the Board's recommendation for a system to provide direct warning capability to flight crews (A-00-66). Other speakers on her panel included Peggy Gervasi, Policy Director of FAA's Joint Planning and Development Office; and Mike Romanowski, Director of FAA's NextGen Implementation and Integration Office.

While in Louisville, Member Higgins also observed, from the cockpit of a UPS Boeing 757, a demonstration on the taxiways of Louisville Standiford Airport of in-cockpit ADS-B technology known as "surface movement management system," an important moving map display that will help UPS and air traffic control monitor taxi conformance and provide critical surface information to prevent ground collisions. Member Higgins also toured the UPS Worldport to observe UPS package sorting operations and the UPS Global Operations Center, from which UPS runs its global airline and, with various interactive employee groups, keeps packages moving around the world despite interruptions or irregularities like volcanoes, hurricanes, out-of-service airplanes or sick employees.

Message from the Office of Administration

As this fiscal year draws to an end and another is soon to begin, please keep in mind the following items:

- In order to maximize our office space, we are preparing a schedule for an agency-wide clean up effort, which will be coordinated by AD-10. Offices will be contacted for a date.
- An accurate property management system is based on the physical inventory, which is key to providing for assets accountability. Please do your part to ensure that our physical inventory database is accurate notifying your Administrative Officer (AO) of any change in the status of property. The AO then will convey this data to AD-10.
- All Procurement requests and requirements should be well defined, supporting documentation complete, and have approved funding. Acquisition soon will distribute information on critical steps on preparing your FY 2009 requirements and how to complete the FY 2009 Procurement Forecast.
- By September 30, 2008, all NTSB employees need to update their emergency contact information using the Employee Express automated personnel-payroll system; for reference see Management Advisory MD-2008-024.
- Beginning January 1, 2009, all employees under the General Schedule (GS) will be under a new performance cycle as stated in Management Advisory MD-2008-012. During the transition, employees will be under revised performance plans until December 31, 2008.

The AD team is committed to providing support to our customers and servicing the agency's mission.

Next Chairman's Corner in September

The next Chairman's Corner will be published on September 12. Please enjoy the remainder of the summer!

